

CHP investigates COVID-19 preliminary positive case involving mutant strain at Block 2, Grandeur Terrace in Tin Shui Wai

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (December 31) said that it is investigating a preliminary positive import-related case of COVID-19 involving a mutant strain.

The case involves a 30-year-old female patient living at Block 2, Grandeur Terrace, Tin Shui Wai. She is an airport ground crew staff member working at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA). The patient received two doses of COVID-19 vaccination on July 25 and August 26 (CoronaVac) in Hong Kong. According to her job nature, she has to undergo frequent regular COVID-19 testing and she tested negative in 10 tests during November 24 to December 28. She developed cough on December 28 and her specimen collected on December 30 in the mobile specimen collection station at Tin Shui Sports Centre in Tin Shui Wai tested preliminarily positive with a Ct value about 29 to 33 involving N501Y and T478K mutant strains.

A preliminary investigation revealed that she mainly worked at the Orange Zone of HKIA to receive outbound and transit passengers, and she has likely acquired the infection during work. The patient has no recent travel history and she last went to work on December 29.

As the patient may carry the Omicron mutant strain, the Government has made a "restriction-testing declaration" tonight for the building where the patient resided in Hong Kong (Block 2, Grandeur Terrace, Tin Shui Wai) and persons who resided or worked at the building will be subject to increased compulsory testing frequency. The places where she had visited and worked in Hong Kong during the incubation period will also be included in a compulsory testing notice. Specified persons who were present at the relevant venues at specified periods need to undergo compulsory testing on the specified date. An epidemiological investigation and contact tracing of the case will continue. Noting the above case, the CHP has immediately conducted a field inspection at HKIA today together with officers from the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department and collected 31 environmental samples from the workplace of the patient, and the storeroom, changing room and restroom the patient had used. The test results are pending.

The spokesman for the CHP said, "The Government has remained vigilant and has been closely monitoring the latest scientific data on mutant strains as well as the epidemic situation of various places. The most stringent anti-epidemic measures will be implemented to prevent the mutant strain from spreading in the local community."

At the moment, the adverse impact on the epidemic situation caused by

the newly emerged mutant strains is not fully known yet, but vaccination is still essential to prevent severe cases and deaths from COVID-19 infection. The Government has launched the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. Members of the public are encouraged to get vaccinated. Details of the programme can be found at the designated website (www.covidvaccine.gov.hk).